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ABSTRACT

An increase in verbal and physical encounters among elementary students led to the implementation of a conflict resolution program to assist teachers and students in solving interpersonal problems. The project was implemented over 8 months in grades three through five in a private elementary school. The goal of the project was to teach students and teachers to use more effective mediation skills when solving conflicts with peers. To achieve its goals, the program focused on communication skills, practice in problem-solving strategies, and exposure to techniques in cooperation and affirmation. The expected outcome was that 8 of the 10 teachers in need of training would develop an understanding of conflict resolution strategies, and 40 of the 50 students would begin using conflict resolution strategies to solve their problems. Outcomes were measured through analysis of results of pre- and post-implementation assessments. As a result of the program, all 10 teachers developed an understanding of effective conflict resolution strategies, and 46 of the 50 students reported the use of conflict resolution strategies. (Appendices include faculty and student assessments, a teacher training packet, student mediation activities, and the letter to parents. Contains 21 references.) (SWW)

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Increasing Teachers' and Students' Skill Levels of Conflict Resolution and Peer Mediation Strategies Through Teacher and Student Training Programs

ED 375 944

by

Jeanne Korn

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A Practicum II Report Presented to the E.D. Program
in Child and Youth Studies in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education

NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY

1994

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PRACTICUM APPROVAL

This practicum took place as described.

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This practicum report was submitted by Jeanne Korn under the direction of the adviser listed below. It was submitted to the Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova Southeastern University.

Approved:

July 25, 1994
Date of Final Approval of Report

Georgianna Lowen
Georgianna Lowen, Adviser

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ABSTRACT

Increasing Teachers' and Students' Skill Levels of Conflict Resolution and Peer Mediation Strategies Through Teacher and Student Training Programs
Korn, Jeanne M., 1994: Practicum Report, Nova Southeastern University, Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies.
Conflict Resolution/Peer Mediation/Mediator/Problem-Solving/Elementary Education/School Discipline

Concerns shared by the faculty regarding an increase in verbal and physical encounters among students were addressed in the form of a conflict resolution training program for teachers. In addition, a mediation training program for selected students in Grades 3, 4, and 5 was initiated.

In an 8-month process, the writer met twice each month with the teachers to introduce conflict resolution strategies. The teachers developed lesson plans incorporating conflict resolution strategies that were implemented with their students. Selected students in Grades 3, 4, and 5 met with the writer every other week for 8 months for 45-minute sessions. Students were introduced to various conflict mediation techniques for use in peer mediation. Students then implemented these strategies within their own classroom setting. Students were able to assist their peers in resolving various conflicts. By utilizing conflict resolution mediation strategies, teachers and students were able to reinforce appropriate problem-solving methods to resolve conflicts among each other.

Outcomes of this practicum were quite favorable. The conflict resolution teacher training program provided teachers with increased knowledge of conflict resolution strategies. Positive outcomes included a significant reduction in physical and verbal encounters among students. Peer mediators provided support and guidance to peers as conflicts occurred within their classrooms. An unexpected outcome was the monthly teacher sharing sessions that resulted from the conflict resolution training program. During these sessions, teachers shared among each other their conflict resolution successes and failures. Many teachers brainstormed together to help each solve difficult conflicts.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Description of Community

The educational setting to which this project was directed is an independent school, housing early childhood three-year-olds through Grade 8 students. In order to substantiate the generalizability, aspects of this school and its community will be highlighted.

The school accepts the premise that each child is unique in ability, talent, and learning style. In accepting that premise, the school recognizes its responsibility in creating a flexible, humanistic, learning environment so that the specific needs of its students will be met.

The school is a college preparatory, tuition-based, independent school in the southeastern United States. The campus is 11 years old in this particular location. The school is comprised of two buildings on a 7 1/2 acre lot. One acre is used for playground areas. The campus is beautifully landscaped with walkways between the lower school building and the upper school building. The university that supports this school is currently involved in building a new middle school facility containing approximately 22,000 square feet of space on the campus.

The school is located in a young family-oriented community which was identified through a feasibility study 3 years ago as having one of the highest, mean, per-family incomes in the state. The school is actively involved in community events and projects. The parent profile is best described as well-educated professionals.

The school has access to many of the university's resources, such as computer services, printing services, library services, and many others. This university support adds much to the college preparatory atmosphere of the school.

The school is organized into two units: the Lower School includes programs for three-year-olds through Grade 5 students. The Upper School accommodates youngsters in Grades 6-8. The design of the curriculum reflects the philosophy and goals of the school and is based on the following principles:

1. The curriculum provides for the individual and group needs of students in a variety of educational settings.

2. The curriculum is flexible to meet the continually growing community, new educational technologies, and the opportunity for program improvement inherent in the strengths and interests possessed by staff members.

3. The curriculum design provides for individual and small group instruction of students grouped for teaching by performance levels.

4. The school's philosophy accommodates both acceleration and enrichment of curriculum areas for individual students. The programs at this school are designed to complement each child's needs and interests in an educational framework where expectations of students, faculty, and administrators are high.

It is this atmosphere that allows average, above-average, and gifted students not only to work to their potential, but often exceed their own expectations. Thinking skills are taught and emphasized in the regular curriculum and in special units. Weekly, students spend time developing projects that incorporate research skills, creative problem-solving skills, and logical reasoning skills. These skills are worked on by all members of the faculty.

Apart from regular curriculum activities, students are encouraged and given the opportunity to participate in challenging and enriching activities throughout the school day. These enrichment activities are supplied by both the classroom teacher and a resource teacher. Specific skills in creativity are taught during some of these sessions. These skills help students explore areas such as originality, elaboration, and fluency in thinking. When students demonstrate an individual interest in a particular area, they are given the opportunity to pursue and study that interest in depth with a resource person: a knowledgeable person in that field. The primary goal of the school, however, is to enhance the intellectual development of the student. Yet, the school also focuses on the development of the total child--intellectually, physically, emotionally, and socially.

The school has 25 classrooms and 35 members on the teaching staff. There are three teaching assistants who work in the Lower School classrooms. The school utilizes the concept of team teaching. The school is comprised of two divisional designations: the Lower School, grades Pre-Kindergarten Four (pre-kindergarten, age 4) through 5th grade; and the Upper School, Grades 6 through 8. Total school enrollment approximates 344 students.

The faculty is made up of 2 males and 28 females. The staff's ages range from 24 to 62. There is a balance of experienced teachers with inexperienced teachers. Nine members of the faculty hold master's degrees. Another six teachers are currently working on advanced degrees.

Utilizing a team-teaching approach, the Lower and Upper School programs provide instruction in homogeneous groups based on ability and learning style for reading and mathematics, while all other instruction is offered in heterogeneous groups. The facility is administered by a headmaster, associate headmaster, and divisional directors under the supervision of the school center dean.

Writer's Work Setting and Role

The writer has had 14 years experience as a classroom teacher and 2 years experience as the associate director of the school. She has been the director of the school for the past 6 years and is responsible for the coordination, budgeting, and supervision of the programs at the school. One important role of the director is to hire and supervise all instructional and non-instructional personnel. As director of the school, the writer is responsible for the overall functioning of all school programs. The writer's main responsibilities include hiring, supervising, and evaluating the faculty and non-instructional personnel; planning, preparing for, and conducting all finance and budgetary operations; scheduling of classes; and overseeing of curriculum implementation.

As director, the writer works with the headmaster, the associate headmaster, the directors of the south campus, and the business and operations manager. As a member of this team, the writer is expected to provide students with a program that incorporates the most up-to-date techniques and technology throughout each area of the curriculum. The planning of staff development seminars and instructional training is the responsibility of the writer as director of the school.

The director serves as the liaison between the school and the community; she is an active member of the city's Chamber of Commerce and the Mayor's Education Committee. The writer must plan, organize, and attend all advisory and parent-teacher meetings. Additional duties involve the development and management of the school-wide volunteer program, the cultural arts program, the option enrichment program, and the extended day program. Regular and frequent grade level, departmental, and team leader meetings, as scheduled by the writer, maintain open lines of communication with the faculty and facilitate interactions between faculty and administration.

In essence, the writer is responsible for the overall operation of the school, the safety and education of each student, and the supervision of the teaching staff.

CHAPTER II

STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Problem Description

Elementary teachers observed an increase in verbal and physical encounters among their students. Many students appeared to lack the necessary social skills that they needed to appropriately resolve conflicts that occurred. The increase in verbal and physical encounters by students with other students had been noted across all the elementary grade levels.

In addition, the elementary teachers requested special assistance in learning effective strategies that would assist them in helping their students use peaceful methods for resolving their conflicts. During weekly staff and team meetings, the elementary teachers discussed the importance of helping students acquire more appropriate methods to deal with disagreements that are part of school life.

Last spring, during a school improvement team meeting the elementary team leaders met with the writer, as director of the school, to share their concerns over this apparent increase in verbal and physical encounters among students and their apparent ineffectiveness in dealing with these encounters. The elementary team leaders felt that the staff did not have sufficient strategies to help students develop more effective problem-solving methods. Briefly stated then, the problem was that teachers and students needed assistance in developing effective, peaceful strategies for resolving conflicts that occurred within the school environment.

Problem Documentation

During the past school year, elementary faculty members shared their concerns during faculty and grade level meetings regarding an increase in verbal and physical interactions among students. The writer, as director of the school, had experienced an increase in the number of discipline referrals to the office from 15 during the 1991-1992 school year to 27 during the 1992-1993 school year.

An assessment (see Appendix A) was last completed during June of 1993 by the elementary teachers which indicated that conflict resolution strategies were not consistently being utilized as indicated on Table 1. Students randomly selected in Grades 3 through 5 completed an assessment (see Appendix B) in June of 1993 which indicated feelings of concern and inadequacy in resolving conflicts as identified by the majority of students' responses of "sometimes," "seldom," or "not at all" as shown on Table 2.

Table 1

Faculty Questionnaire - Spring 1993

Questions	Number of Teacher Responses C	S	O	I	N
1. I incorporate conflict resolution strategies as a method to help students develop appropriate social behaviors.	2	3	4	1	0
2. I utilize conflict resolution techniques that help students develop stronger self-esteem.	1	2	3	3	1
3. I implement strategies that help students use less name-calling and fewer put-down comments.	0	2	3	3	2
4. I utilize techniques that increase the use of supportive comments by students.	2	2	1	3	2
5. I use specific techniques that help students learn to work and play cooperatively.	3	3	1	3	0
6. I am confident in my ability to prevent body contact among students in my classroom.	1	3	2	2	2
7. I use techniques that help students develop more caring sensitive behaviors toward each other.	2	2	2	3	1
8. I have developed specific techniques to help students increase their skills in understanding other points of view.	1	1	3	3	2
9. I have taught mediation skills to students.	0	1	2	5	3
10. I am aware of specific active listening techniques that assist students in developing conflict resolution strategies.	0	0	1	2	7
n = 10 Total Number of Responses	**12**	**19**	**22**	**28**	**20**

Scale: 5 = Consistently
4 = Somewhat Consistently
3 = Occasionally
2 = Infrequently
1 = Never

Table 2

Student Questionnaire - Spring 1993

Questions	Number of Student Responses A	O	S	Se	N
1. I feel liked.	5	8	10	15	12
2. I get along well with my classmates.	10	13	7	12	8
3. I know how to solve problems without yelling and calling names.	12	9	12	11	6
4. I know how to solve problems with my friends without using body contact.	16	11	10	9	4
5. I listen to others when conflicts arise.	9	12	13	11	5
6. I speak kindly to my friends.	19	13	10	5	3
7. I help my friends solve problems.	9	8	11	12	10
8. I tell my friends if they do something that makes me angry.	9	8	11	10	12
	89	82	84	85	60

n = 50 Scale:
5 = Always
4 = Often
3 = Sometimes
2 = Seldom
1 = Not at all

Students randomly selected in Grades 3 through 5 completed a student mediator assessment instrument (see Appendix C) in June of 1993 which indicated a lack of knowledge of mediation techniques as shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Student Mediator Assessment Results - Summer 1993

	Number of Student Responses	
Competency	Yes	No
1. Understands mediation techniques.	1	9
2. Understands ways to help students handle anger and frustration.	2	8
3. Understand "reflective "listening" techniques.	0	10
4. Understands how to guide students to use conflict resolution strategies.	1	10
5. Understand ways to help students learn about peaceful solutions to conflicts.	4	6
	8	43

n = 10

Causative Analysis

Students appeared to be solving conflicts that arose using inappropriate methods, such as name-calling, inappropriate language, and body contact, including shoving, pushing, slapping, tripping, and punching. Students were unable to state other ways to solve problems using appropriate methods when asked by their teachers. Indeed, students were exposed to television programs which depict violence and harsh language on a daily basis. As the elementary teachers observed students' interactions with one another, it was quite obvious that many of the students' behaviors modeled the behavior of their favorite television characters.

An increasing number of students' family structures appeared to lack stability. In a large number of families, parents were divorced which did appear to directly impact a child's self-esteem. Parents shared with the faculty members that it had become necessary to provide students with emotional support of a child psychologist or child psychiatrist in order to assist him or her in dealing with changing family structures.

Quite as evident, due to economic pressures, in many instances both parents were employed. Therefore, many elementary students spent time before and after school in the extended day program or with surrogate caretakers which limited family interaction and socialization times together. Students and parents had verbally expressed this to the faculty during informal conversations, as well as formal conferences.

Teachers and students had not received formal instruction in conflict resolution strategies, and therefore, many times were void of the necessary "tools" needed to assist students in learning peaceful strategies to resolve problems. The faculty and student handbooks explained the discipline policy of the school and the expected behavior code to be followed. However, specific training in methods to assist in the resolution of conflicts had not been provided to students or staff members.

Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

Conflict resolution strategies can be integrated through children's literature as part of a whole language program within elementary schools, thus enabling students to learn creative ways to solve conflicts by reading and writing stories about conflicts. Children benefit from the study of concepts, such as cooperation, affirmation, and communication through whole language techniques. Students today need to develop an understanding of conflict and the part that conflict plays in their lives. Due to the fact that students today have a great deal of difficulty getting along with each other, it is important for schools to help students identify alternative methods for the resolution of their conflicts through curriculum development activities (Shatles, 1989).

Kemple (1992b) discussed factors associated with the acceptance and rejection of preschool children by their peers. Behaviors and characteristics associated with peer rejection include aggression and misinterpretation of peers' emotions. A child's social reputation may influence the way other children perceive his or her behavior. Good communication is a skill important to the continuation of social play. Children well-liked were more likely than others to be clear in direct communications and more skillful in solving problems.

Certainly, there is much concern about the way in which social skills instruction is approached within education today. Social skills deficits are viewed as contributing factors to the vast social problems of youth in our society (Wienke & others, 1991).

Candler and others (1990) stressed that although the exact nature of the relationship has not been determined, there appears to be a link between substance abuse and both delinquency and socially unacceptable behavior in youth. Performance in interpersonal situations depends on a set of discrete verbal and nonverbal response components. Thus, specific parameters can be identified which determine the adequacy of social behaviors. Candler stresses that social skills that are appropriate in one situation may not necessarily be appropriate in another situation. The various component elements which comprise adequate social behavior are learned-response skills.

Schmidt and Friedman (1987) stated that classroom conflicts cause hurt feelings, anger, and loss of valuable learning time. Students can be taught to resolve conflicts fairly, instead of viewing an incident as a "win/lose" situation. Schmidt and Friedman emphasize that students need to be given formal instruction in conflict solving.

Roderick (1988) and Lessinger (1989) agreed that stressed children have not been taught how to resolve issues peacefully during a time when human survival depends on finding alternatives to violence. One of the most critical skills that students need is to learn the importance of caring for oneself, mankind, the community and country, and the earth. Roderick stated that "at a time when human survival depends on finding alternatives to violence for resolving differences, there is no more compelling mission for educators" (p. 90). Cahoon (1987) points out that a large amount of instructional time is lost every day and that students need to understand how to help themselves by being taught how to solve problems in a peaceful way.

Greenberg (1992) described the importance of the early years in beginning to guide children toward ethical individuality and constructive membership in groups. Greenberg stated that children are not born moral, ethical, democratic creatures, although they are born with the potential for all of these aspects of good character. For this reason, educators need to be concerned with the implementation of curriculum that emphasizes the development of empathy, cooperative behaviors, understanding of right and wrong, and other aspects of moral development.

Greenberg stressed that children need to be encouraged to solve small problems by "walking through" each inappropriate behavior to help the child fully understand possible alternate solutions.

Buzzelli and File (1989) described the importance of successful peer relations and how they contribute significantly to young children's social and emotional development. Relationships with peers provide children with opportunities to learn about themselves, as well as how to get along with others. Children must be taught ways to select appropriate goals and strategies that are compatible with solving a particular conflict.

"When an individual makes a choice between two or more options, that individual is resolving a conflict between incompatible goals" (Coombs, 1987, p. 355). Some conflicts between individuals occur because they want different things and must settle for the same thing. Therefore, social conflict occurs. However, developing strategies to help solve conflicts is a necessary component to foster the development of compatible relationships with one another (Coombs).

Hartup, Laursen, and Stewart (1988) describe a group of children that was observed at play, thus affording an opportunity to examine spontaneously elicited conflicts in the setting in which most of them naturally occur. Friendship was examined and was found to have a direct bearing on whether the children would continue socializing after a conflict. The closeness of the friendship many times determined whether conflicts were resolved. The resolution of conflicts appeared to be important to the continuation of the socialization process.

Of equal importance, faced with the demands of an increasingly technical workforce, educators must provide students with advanced job skills and "people skills." According to the Secretary's Commission on Achieving National Skills, industry leaders want qualified employees who also can work creatively as part of a team. Therefore, educators must develop strategies that encourage cooperation among students. Cooperative students are not threatened by disagreements, but rather understand that they are inevitable because people have differing opinions. They find ways to solve the problem rather than trying to dominate other people (McFarland, 1992).

Rose (1992) stressed the importance of emphasizing the socialization process to help facilitate the social competence of many children. There is empirical support for the notion that children who tend to be highly socially competent have little indication of mental or emotional disorders. However, children who are assessed as relatively socially incompetent have more difficulties. Elementary and secondary schools have the potential for contributing to the development of social competence. Furthermore, Rose stated that often interpersonal difficulties are the result of ineffective or limited response patterns that are characteristically used by the child. Children may often interact with others ineffectively simply due to the lack of alternative, appropriate strategies for interaction.

Tabachnick (1990) examined ways that students can learn peaceful methods for resolving conflicts. The highest priority for teachers was pupil control, socialization to habits of self-control, and quiet obedience. Therefore, peace education at the elementary school level should typically emphasize developing knowledge, attitudes, and action in the context of personal relationships.

To conclude, it was quite evident that the need for students and teachers to develop effective conflict resolution strategies should be a component of every school's curriculum. Without a well-designed conflict resolution program for teachers and students, it was apparent that inappropriate verbal and physical encounters continued to escalate within the school. It was the director's responsibility to become actively involved in developing and planning for a conflict resolution training program for students and teachers. By providing the faculty with the necessary techniques to assist students in resolving their conflicts, the verbal and physical encounters will most likely decrease. In addition, students needed to be shown alternate methods to use when dealing with conflicts, hence, strengthening their socialization skills.

CHAPTER III

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

Goals and Expectations

The elementary teachers observed an increase in verbal and physical encounters among their students. Many students appeared to lack the necessary social skills that they need to appropriately resolve conflicts, therefore, establishing an environment that encouraged cooperation and respect was of critical importance to educators. However, assumptions cannot be made that students and teachers intrinsically understand and utilize effective strategies to resolve conflicts.

Projected outcomes of this practicum involved the development of a conflict resolution program to assist teachers and students in their quest for more effective problem-solving methods in regard to conflict resolution. The utilization of conflict resolution strategies will have far reaching effects on the teachers and students, as well as on the capability of the school to achieve its goal of establishing a safe and peaceful learning environment.

The writer explored ways industry leaders are developing skills in qualified employees that enable them to work cooperatively as part of a team. Additionally, the writer investigated various ways psychologists are assisting educators in identifying important social skills that students should acquire in order to be effective employees. Furthermore, the writer interviewed individual students, parents, and teachers to investigate their perceptions and opinions of social skills training for the students as a curriculum priority. As a result, the elementary teachers and students requested that more emphasis be placed on developing conflict resolution skills throughout the entire elementary division during the 1993-1994 school year.

Briefly stated, the goal of the writer was that teachers and students would use more effective peaceful strategies for resolving conflicts. The writer also hoped that selected students would be able to use effective mediation skills to utilize with their peers through the implementation of a conflict resolution process of problem solving.

Expected Outcomes

Currently, there were 10 elementary teachers that needed to develop and/or strengthen their conflict resolution strategies. These elementary teachers needed to develop an understanding of effective strategies that would assist in reducing verbal and physical conflicts among students after the inservice program. Prior to the implementation of this practicum, the elementary teachers were administered a faculty questionnaire (see Appendix A) which indicated that most of the teachers scored a 3 or lower on the use of conflict resolution strategies within their classroom.

The writer expected that at least 8 out of 10 elementary teachers would develop an understanding of effective conflict resolution strategies that would help reduce verbal and physical encounters among students after the training program as indicated by a score of 4 for each question on the post faculty assessment questionnaire (see Appendix A). The results of the pre-implementation faculty assessment questionnaire results are listed in Table 1.

Similarly, the writer found that 50 students in Grades 1 through 5 engaged in verbal and physical encounters as a means of dealing with conflict situations on the playground and in classrooms. As measured by the pre-implementation student questionnaire (see Appendix B), most students rated themselves as a 3 or lower on the utilization of conflict resolution strategies on Table 2. The writer expected that at least 40/50 students would begin to solve conflicts on the playground and in the classrooms using conflict resolution strategies as indicated by a score of 4 for each question as measured by the student questionnaire (see Appendix B).

Equally important, 10 randomly selected students in Grades 3 through 5 rated themselves on the student mediation assessment device (see Appendix C) prior to implementation. The results indicated that the students felt that they were ineffective in assisting their peers in resolving conflicts using peaceful strategies as shown in Table 3. The writer expected that 7/10 student mediators would begin to assist students in solving conflicts during recess using conflict resolution strategies after the student mediation training program. This would be indicated by four student responses of "yes" on the student mediator assessment (see Appendix C).

Measurement of Outcomes

Projected outcomes were determined through an analysis and interpretation of results acquired by means of pre- and post-implementation comparisons using several indicating tools. As a result of implementation, the writer expected that at least 8 out of 10 elementary teachers would develop an understanding of effective conflict resolution strategies that would help reduce verbal and physical encounters among students as indicated by a score of at least 4 on the post faculty assessment questionnaire (see Appendix A).

Likewise, as a result of implementation, the writer expected that after receiving instruction in conflict resolution at least 40/50 students would begin to solve conflicts on the playground and in their classrooms using conflict resolution strategies as indicated by a score of 4 or higher on the post student assessment questionnaire (see Appendix B).

Additionally, the writer expected that after implementation of the student mediation training program, 7/10 student mediators would begin to assist students in solving conflicts during recess using effective conflict resolution strategies as indicated by four student responses of "yes" on the post student mediator assessment instrument (see Appendix C).

Each of the 10 teachers completed an individual assessment of the practicum techniques gained during the 8-month implementation sessions using the evaluation form found in Appendix A. Then a comparison was to be done using a pre/post assessment comparison of the mean scores obtained on the faculty assessment questionnaire (see Appendix A) as well as a comparison of each of the individual numerical ratings for each of the 10 teachers.

The 50 students were asked to complete an individual assessment of the practicum techniques gained during the 8-month implementation period using the evaluation form found in Appendix B. Then a comparison was to be prepared using a pre/post assessment comparison of the mean scores obtained on the student assessment questionnaire (see Appendix B) as well as a comparison of the individual numerical ratings completed by each of the 50 students.

The 10 student mediators were to be asked to complete an individual assessment of the practicum techniques gained during the 8-month implementation period using the evaluation form (see Appendix C). Then a comparison was computed utilizing a pre/post assessment comparison of the increase in the number of "yes" responses to determine if the 10 student mediators indicated four positive responses at post implementation.

The journals kept by the teachers were to be utilized to gain information about each of the training sessions during the 8-month implementation period. The expected outcomes were hoped to make better informed and prepared each teacher and student to develop an understanding of conflict and to learn the win-win method of conflict resolution, hence avoiding verbal or physical encounters with one another.

CHAPTER IV

SOLUTION STRATEGY

Discussion and Evaluation of Solutions

The problem of elementary teachers' and students' inability to utilize effective peaceful strategies to resolve conflicts is resultant from a lack of knowledge in the use of conflict resolution strategies, and solutions to the problem of effective utilization of effective conflict resolution strategies are vast and varied. However, strategies for learning effective methods reflected the common element of the importance of identifying the role educators want conflict resolution to play in the development of an effective classroom management system.

Among the essential factors contributing to successful utilization of conflict resolution strategies are effective communication skills, practice in problem-solving strategies, and exposure to techniques in cooperation and affirmation. Much emphasis was placed on an active rather than passive teacher involvement in the direct teaching of conflict resolution strategies.

According to Shatles (1989), students need to develop an understanding of cooperation, affirmation, and communication through the use of semantic mapping techniques, role playing, journal writing, and brainstorming. Teachers need to include concept development in affirmation, cooperation, and communication skills within any peace education curriculum. Additionally, students must be given direct instruction and practice on activities involving problem-solving strategies.

Schmidt and Friedman (1987) emphasized that students need to be given formal instruction in conflict solving through sharpening students' perceptions, helping students to understand the concept of fairness, and playing by the rules. Furthermore, students must be given direct instruction in methods to use to effectively identify the problems, focus on the problem, attack the problem instead of the person, listen with an open mind, interact with others with respect, and take responsibility for one's actions. Schmidt and Friedman further stress that students need to work at expressing their needs, rights, and feelings, in a way that is direct, honest, and nonthreatening.

The importance of encouraging children to solve small problems by walking through each inappropriate behavior to help the child understand possible alternative solutions is essential in developing and improving conflict resolution techniques. Equally important is the development of empathy, cooperative behaviors, understanding of right and wrong, and other aspects of moral character development. Teachers need to incorporate methods in their curriculum that encourage students be self-reliant, independent, diverse in problem solving, introspective concerning their behaviors and attitudes, and respectful when interacting with peers (Greenberg, 1992).

Wienke and others (1991) stated that a positive, proactive approach to social skills development within schools as opposed to reactive responses to problems needs to be provided for students in order to help alleviate the extensive social skills deficits of youth in our society.

According to Kemple (1992b), children must be given "on-the-spot" guidance when real conflict situations occur. Children should be encouraged by an adult to voice their perceptions of the conflict situation, generate potential solutions, and jointly decide on and implement a mutually acceptable solution for the problem. Children are capable of generating a wide range of ideas for potential solution; however, the opportunity must be provided, as well as the emotional support from the adult to engage in this type of problem-solving endeavor.

Roderick (1988) and Candler (1990) described various component elements which comprise adequate learned social behavior in children. Mediation programs demonstrate to students that there are options other than aggression or passivity as a means of coping with conflicts. Student mediators can be trained to assist students in solving disputes. In fact, over 300 schools around the country have established student mediation programs. Many of them report that student mediators have helped to solve large numbers of conflicts, that the agreements remain intact in the vast majority of cases, and that the numbers of student suspensions drop dramatically in schools with effective mediation programs.

Buzzelli and File (1989) stated that teachers need to demonstrate social skills by explicitly modeling socially acceptable behavior, such as sharing, helping others, listening, and problem solving. Indeed, it was certain that teachers need to identify ways to assist a student recognize his/her social goals and ways of achieving them. Furthermore, teachers needed to demonstrate social skills by explicitly modeling socially appropriate behaviors, such as sharing, initiating positive conversations, and helping others. Specific information regarding ways to solve problems should be provided to students in an effort to help them become more skillful in decision making during conflict situations. One factor that appeared to be most influential in helping students learn to solve problems was highlighting their successes by talking about those successful behaviors that were effective in the conflict resolution process. The Resolving Conflict Creatively Program (1990) focused on conflict resolution and intergroup relations. The program showed young people nonviolent alternatives for dealing with conflict. The program teaches children skills to make nonviolent alternatives to conflict real in their own lives by increasing students' understanding and appreciation of their own and different cultures, and shows children ways they can help in creating a more peaceful world. The program involved teachers in a 20-hour training program. The program utilized a 10-unit curriculum for students on instruction in conflict resolution, classroom visitation by expert staff development consultants, and a student mediation component.

Davis-Pack (1989) emphasized the importance of role playing in helping students to learn basic negotiation techniques. Students were trained through role playing situations at the International Center for Cooperation and Conflict Resolution in New York City. Students learned through role playing situations that conflict many times promotes, as well as increases, negative behaviors. Students were involved in role playing situations that encouraged learning through modeling of positive problem-solving behaviors.

Cahoon (1988) described a mediation process for students that created a safe, productive environment. The process required that every 2 weeks a teacher selected two students as mediators for the class. The principal served as the mediator trainer providing the students with an explanation of the school's rules and ways students can achieve following these rules. Principals emphasized that mediators do not break up fights but must seek assistance from an adult. Mediators worked with students to solve problems with their heads and hearts, not their hands. Mediators served as peer models by exhibiting appropriate behaviors and working with students to explain alternate behavioral choices for conflict resolution situations as they occurred. Cahoon further stated that mediators learn valuable problem-solving skills, and students learn that conflicts can be resolved more effectively by talking them out than by fighting. Mediators and students became active participants in enhancing the school's environment.

McFarland (1992) described ways people skills training can be incorporated into the school. First, students should be assigned projects that require the effort of several people thus allowing students to experience cooperation. Second, listening skills need to be taught to students. Controversial subjects can be discussed and stipulate that before anyone can express his or her own opinion, that person must first rephrase an opposing opinion. Third, teachers need to demonstrate cooperative problem-solving behavior in their work with students. Interpersonal relationship skills and conflict resolution should be addressed through reading and writing assignments.

Kemple (1992a) discussed a number of strategies that teachers can use in their attempts to help children achieve social acceptance. Grouping children who lack social skills with those who are socially competent, planning special play sessions, planning special activities that encourage problem solving, guiding a child who has difficulty entering play situations, and helping other students to understand the unpopular child's behaviors are methods that provide children with opportunities to practice appropriate social skills within the classroom environment.

Similarly, students should be afforded an opportunity to practice selecting alternative solutions when conflicts develop, through role playing different types of conflict situations in order to analyze alternatives. An important step in controlling conflict is to work together to find possible solutions by using the techniques of brainstorming. Another method in finding a solution is to pick the best idea. To do so, the idea must solve the problem and be acceptable to both sides. Active listening practice should be provided for students as they engage in the conflict resolution process ("Controlling Conflict," 1991).

Conflict is a natural human state and is better approached with skills than avoidance. The use of mediation to resolve school-based disputes can result in improved communication between and among students, teachers, administrators, and parents and can improve the school's climate. Shifting the responsibility for solving appropriate school conflicts from the teachers and administrators to the students frees the adults to concentrate on teaching rather than on discipline. The mediation program needs to emphasize listening to others' points of view and the peaceful resolution of differences. Mediation training should be conducted through ongoing classroom outreach seminars, mediator training, and the actual mediation of disputes (Davis & Porter, 1985).

Accordingly, Tabachnick (1990) and Rose (1992) agreed that peace education aimed at the elementary student should include role playing to develop their communication skills. An emphasis on developing knowledge, attitudes, and action in regards to personal interactions will provide students with a foundation for peaceful problem solving. Conflict resolution curriculum should be aimed at exposing children to the idea that there may be nonviolent solutions to conflicts.

Prutzman (1983) discussed the importance of providing students with conflict resolution activities involving cooperation, affirmation, and communication. Through affirmation children begin to feel better about themselves and others. In an affirmative atmosphere, positive feelings escalate, put downs lessen. Children develop self-confidence, a sense of self, and an appreciation of others. Cooperation helps children appreciate other people's point of view. Individuals experience positive feelings in a cooperative atmosphere. Communication activities allow children to practice verbal effective responses to problems, rather than resorting to inappropriate verbal or physical encounters with one another.

Description of Selected Solution

The current literature indicated that teachers and students needed to be provided with effective strategies for the resolution of conflicts in order to reduce the number of inappropriate verbal and physical encounters between students. Based on the feelings of the elementary teachers of being uninformed and unprepared to deal with the increasing number of inappropriate student behaviors, the 8-month inservice program for elementary teachers in Grades 1 through 5 was designed to include training that was identified in the literature. The training program was designed to assist the staff in developing an understanding of effective conflict resolution strategies that can be utilized in their classrooms. Additionally, the writer developed and implemented a student mediation program for selected students in Grades 3 through 5. The mediation program provided selected students with mediation skills to assist peers with conflict resolution. Finally, the writer provided a conflict resolution guide for teachers in Grades 1 through 5 which guided the teacher through the necessary components of establishing a classroom environment that promotes and teaches conflict resolution strategies. This guide was used as a framework or reference for the teachers as they developed lessons throughout their curriculum to teach and reinforce the concepts presented in the guide.

Based on the philosophy of the school, each teacher developed lessons teaching conflict resolution strategies based on their individual class needs and teaching style. The conflict resolution lessons were added to the school's existing social skills curriculum. The writer felt that students must learn to begin to deal with conflicts through a problem-solving approach as students are capable of behaving and cooperating. Peace begins from within each individual. Therefore, educators must begin to teach peaceful strategies for problem solving to all students as indicated by the current literature.

Based on the statements of needs from the elementary teachers at the writer's school (see Appendix A), phase one of the 8-month inservice program for the elementary teachers was designed to include four components of conflict resolution training that were identified in the literature. The teacher inservice training component included information and strategies to assist teachers in gaining knowledge to assist students in improving their communication, affirmation, cooperation, and conflict resolution skills. The teacher training packet (see Appendix D) developed by the writer was used to provide instruction at the bimonthly sessions during the 8-month implementation period. The writer calculated a pre/post mean score comparison using the faculty assessment questionnaire (see Appendix A) at the completion of the implementation period. A primary focus of the inservice training was to effectively present conflict resolution strategies and methods to integrate these strategies within classroom environments in an effort to address the needs of the classroom teachers as collected by the pre-implementation assessment.

The rationale followed in the selection of a solution strategy was founded upon teacher request for additional knowledge of conflict resolution strategies and the needs of the students based on the increase in verbal and physical encounters among elementary students. Phase two of the 8-month implementation process was implementation by the elementary teachers of the newly acquired conflict resolution strategies obtained in phase one of the teacher inservice program. The elementary teachers began to implement the conflict resolution strategies within their classrooms through weekly lessons using the teacher training packet as the framework for their lesson development. Following the instructional periods each week, the teachers required the students to practice the conflict resolution strategies throughout each school day. Post assessments took place at the culmination of the implementation period through the use of the student assessment questionnaire (see Appendix B). A pre/post assessment comparison of mean scores was calculated at the completion of the second phase of implementation to compare the increase in the students' knowledge and use of conflict resolution strategies.

The third phase of the inservice conflict resolution implementation process involves a 10-week peer mediation training program to assist students in learning techniques to solve conflicts. Students were allowed to practice these newly acquired conflict resolution skills during the daily playground periods. Based on the statements of needs from the selected students questioned concerning their awareness and use of mediation strategies (see Appendix C), the writer met weekly with the student mediators to provide training in conflict resolution strategies as set forth in the student mediation activities (see Appendix E).

Report of Action Taken

To initiate the 8-month implementation, the writer met with the 10 elementary teachers and an overview of the conflict resolution inservice training program (see Appendix D) was given. During this orientation, a brief summary of the research was shared with the teachers, as well as the results of the faculty questionnaire (see Appendix A) that was completed by the faculty during the spring of 1993.

Teachers were given an 8-month calendar and future bimonthly meeting dates were identified through May 1994. It was decided that future meetings would be held during the first and third weeks of every month after school from 3:15-

4:15 p.m. for 6 months. During this orientation meeting, the writer presented a brief overview of the student mediation program (see Appendix E) which involved 10 students from Grades 3, 4, and 5. The faculty and the writer developed guidelines for choosing the mediators from each grade. The guidelines stated that a mediator should be a cooperative student; the mediator should be well-liked by his/her peers; the mediator should be a model for appropriate behavior; and the mediator should have the ability and desire to engage in extensive verbal interactions with other grade-level students.

During the practicum implementation process, the writer utilized a number of mechanisms for recording any unexpected outcomes that occurred during the 8-month period. First, once per month the writer met individually with each of the 10 elementary teachers to discuss any concerns or problems that had arisen during the implementation time period. These individual meetings were scheduled by the writer during the teachers' planning periods or after school. Second, in addition to the training sessions, the writer met once per month with the student mentors to discuss any concerns or questions that may have developed from the mediation component of the implementation program. These brief meetings were held during the students' recess period. Third, the writer observed the 10 elementary teacher classrooms numerous times per month to identify any needs that were not being met by the conflict resolution implementation program.

In addition, a weekly log was kept by the teachers and student mediators during the 8-month implementation period. Special concerns, suggestions, and general comments from the teachers and students were listed in the journal. Also, the writer kept a log to record the classroom observation visits, individual meetings with the teachers and mentors, and any other events relating to the implementation of conflict resolution strategies during the 8-month period.

Although somewhat time consuming, the writer scheduled 1 to 2 hours per week of office availability time to meet with the teachers in an effort to provide additional time to clearly understand the conflict resolution strategies and ways to integrate these strategies within the classroom environment.

The writer scheduled a time during the first month to meet individually with each class in Grades 1 through 5 to discuss the conflict resolution strategies that each of the teachers would be sharing with them during the next 8 months. The writer shared the results of the student questionnaire (see Appendix B) that was given to the students during the spring of 1993. The writer explained to each class that the teachers would be preparing conflict resolution lessons for them throughout the 8-month implementation period. The writer wrote a special article in the Director's Monthly Update, the school's monthly newsletter, explaining to the parents the conflict resolution program.

During the first month of implementation, the writer also met with the 10 student mediators from Grades 3, 4, and 5. The teachers of these grades selected the mediators based on the criteria developed during the first teacher inservice session the first month. The writer provided an overview of the mediation program to the students, as well as selecting future meeting dates, times, and locations for the mediation training. The writer distributed "mediation folders" to each mediator and a letter for permission (see Appendix F) to participate that was to be signed by a parent and returned to the writer the following day. The students decided that they would prefer meeting during the recess period every second and fourth week of each month from 12:55-1:35 p.m. in order to avoid missing any classroom assignments. Each student was given an 8-month calendar and all future meeting dates were identified.

During the first session of the second month of implementation, the writer discussed "What is conflict?". The writer identified specific classroom conflict creators. Some of the conflict creators shared included a competitive classroom, an intolerant classroom, a classroom with poor communication, and a classroom environment with inadequate problem-solving skills. Teachers brainstormed specific solutions to each of the conflict creators. In addition, the teachers participated in a discussion describing ways students in their classrooms responded to a conflict situation. Subsequently, the teachers participated in a role-playing session acting out the ways students handle conflicts. Specific role-playing was done to show ineffective ways of solving conflicts, such as using body contact, name calling, the use of inappropriate body gestures, and ignoring each other.

At the second session during the second month of implementation, the writer described ways in which the teacher can become a facilitator in creating a philosophy of peace within a classroom. The elementary faculty were given the opportunity to discuss peaceful methods for handling their real-life conflicts within the classroom. The writer concluded this session, "How Do Your Students Respond to Conflict?," by dividing the teachers into groups of four and giving each group a conflict to solve using peaceful strategies. The writer asked that the teachers begin using the conflict resolution strategies within their classroom, as well as incorporating a conflict resolution instructional time into their weekly lesson plans.

During the first session of the second month of implementation for the student mediators, the writer introduced the conflict resolution rules for mediators. The eight rules for mediation were discussed in depth with the mediators. Next, each student practiced giving specific examples to help explain the eight rules.

During the second session of month 2, the student mediators began the training program by introducing the topic, "The Role of the Student Mediator." The writer stressed that the peer mediators must be caring students who serve as impartial listeners and facilitators to help other students resolve conflicts. In addition, students were given the opportunity to participate in an activity which enabled them to practice establishing guidelines for student mediators. A role-playing activity allowed the students to practice the process of mediation. The student mediator selected a problem from the writer's conflict box and practiced the eight steps of mediation. Students volunteered to be the "students in conflict" and each student was chosen to be a mediator. The eight steps for mediation were practiced by every student.

Step I of the conflict resolution strategies (see Appendix D) was introduced to the faculty during the first meeting of the third month of implementation. Teachers were asked to demonstrate effective methods to help students "cool-off" after an argument. Role-playing was utilized to visually demonstrate time-out, deep breathing techniques, and mediation time strategies. The writer asked each teacher to relate one alternate method for handling conflicts using cooling-off strategies.

During the second session of the third month, Step II: Talk Time, was introduced as a technique that allowed each student involved in a conflict an opportunity to tell the events that lead up to the conflict and the events that occurred during the conflict. Solution finding became the focus of this session. Teachers were given specific conflict resolution strategies to use, such as brainstorming, to help students become better problem solvers. Each teacher shared his/her own conflict resolution lesson plan with the group (see Appendix G).

During the third month, the student mediators reviewed the conflict resolution steps. Students were given written copies of the eight conflict resolution steps for their mediation folders. Due to the winter holidays, the second session of the third month of implementation was conducted during the same week as the first session. Students participated in developing conflict strategies, such as demonstrating methods to help peers cool down after an argument. The student mediators engaged in two activities to help practice physical exercises to calm down. The writer asked the mediators to brainstorm "emotion" words. The writer explained to the mediators how to listen for important verbal clues when talking with an upset or angry peer.

The faculty discussed ways to help students learn to choose a solution for a conflict during the first meeting of the fourth month of implementation. Step III: Choosing a Solution, introduced strategies to examine alternate solutions for problems by brainstorming, eliminating unworkable solutions, and prioritizing solutions that were agreeable to all parties involved in the conflict. During this meeting, the writer explained the importance of having students agree upon the best solution for the conflict by allowing the students to discuss all possibilities with each other. Teachers role-played conflict situations and practiced finding workable solutions to real-life classroom conflicts.

The writer introduced Step IV: Implement the Solution to the faculty during the second session of the fourth month of the program. Teachers were instructed to consider the solution the "product outcome" of the conflict and therefore should be evaluated as to its success or shortcomings. The writer explained to the faculty that modifications may be necessary during the solution stage of the conflict resolution process. The writer encouraged the faculty to continue conflict resolution instruction with their classes on a weekly basis.

During the fourth month of implementation, ,the students engaged in discussions and role-playing activities that gave them the opportunity to practice the first four conflict resolution steps as outlined in the student mediation activities (see Appendix E). The students were asked to participate in two role-playing activities that reinforced previously introduced conflict resolution strategies. Following each role-playing session, the writer involved the students in a discussion to determine the level of knowledge of each step. Students were asked to share with each other suggestions that would help everyone become better mediators.

As the teachers met for the first session of the fifth month of implementation, the writer provided a general review of the conflict resolution Steps I-IV as described in the teacher activity packet (see Appendix D). Teachers were asked to discuss how they had used the conflict resolution strategies with students. Step V from the teacher activity packet (see Appendix D) was introduced to the faculty which provided an opportunity for the writer to discuss peaceful responses to conflict. Tolerance, taking turns, modifying choices, and identifying new choices were introduced as positive responses to conflict. The writer discussed ways in which each of these peaceful choices could be incorporated into the faculty's behavior management plans.

During the second session of the fifth month, the elementary faculty were divided into small groups and were asked to write a group lesson plan incorporating the conflict resolution strategies that were introduced during the past 4 months. Each group presented their lesson plan to the larger group. During the discussions that developed from these presentations, the writer purchased additional "peace materials," such as books, puppets, tapes, etc., to help enhance the conflict resolution instructional lessons of the elementary teachers. The writer asked the 10 elementary teachers to continue implementing conflict resolution strategies within their classrooms and to keep a calendar log as the strategies are used (see Appendix G).

A review of Step IV (see Appendix E) helped the student mediators practice effective communication by being a "reflective" listener during the first session of the fifth month of implementation. The student mediators were divided into small groups and given newspaper articles that described some type of conflict. The writer requested that the student mediators identify the who, what, where, when, why, and how of the conflict in the newspaper article. Next, the mediators were given an effective listener checklist (see Appendix E). The students were divided into groups of three. Two students were asked to be the students in conflict and the third student took on the role of the conflict mediator. Various conflicts were presented, and the writer asked the mediators to practice their mediation strategies, but being most aware of their effective listening skills.

During the second session of the fifth month, the writer introduced "I" messages to the mediators. Students engaged in various role-playing activities that allowed them to practice I messages. For example, one student told his/her information about conflict using I messages while another student listened without interrupting the make-believe conflict. Throughout this session, the student mediators were given many opportunities to listen to and to participate in reflective listening activities.

The program for the first session of month 6 involved the student mediators and teachers. Student mediators met respectively with each of their teachers to inform them that they would be completing the mediation training program this month. The elementary teacher talked with the mediators about ways the students could become involved within the classroom as conflicts occurred. The writer reinforced the concept that during any conflict resolution mediation session a teacher must be present before the student mediators could intervene with the mediation process.

The elementary teachers began implementing the conflict resolution process within their classrooms, as well as using the student mediators as assistants. For the remainder of the 6 months of implementation, the teachers concentrated on implementing the conflict resolution strategies with their students as needed. The writer spent time within the classrooms, on the playground, and in the lunchroom observing teachers using the conflict resolution strategies and student mediators as a "tool" for solving conflicts among students.

The writer met with the student mediators for Steps VI and VII of the student mediation activities (see Appendix E) for the second session of the sixth month of the program. Students were asked to respond to specific situations as they became "conflict characters." A question-and-answer time was allocated to discuss past training sessions and any concerns that the student mediators had concerning their roles as student mediators. The writer reflected on the seven steps in the mediation process. Students were asked to keep a record of their involvement in mediation. Specifically, the writer asked that the type of conflict and solutions implemented be recorded by each mediator.

During the first week of the seventh month, a workshop for teachers on conflict resolution was provided by a prominent school psychologist. The psychologist presented the philosophy of conflict resolution, its effectiveness with students, and various effective conflict-solving techniques. The elementary teachers were given an opportunity to ask questions and discuss specific classroom conflicts. The psychologist gave recommendations and guidelines for appropriate use of conflict resolution with the classroom. For the remaining weeks, the writer continued to observe teachers using conflict resolution strategies in their classrooms and on the playground.

During the seventh month of implementation, the student mediators met with a local attorney experienced in mediation strategies. The attorney discussed the importance of mediation in solving conflicts and gave specific examples of ways students could use mediation in their lives. The attorney described how the mediation process is implemented in the legal system and gave descriptions of mediation cases. The students participated in a "mock" mediation session using many of the conflict resolution strategies that the students had previously learned. During the second session of this month, the student mediators participated in a brainstorming session on how to develop solutions to conflicts. Students learned how to evaluate and to eliminate various solutions. The concept of ranking solutions from most effective to least effective was demonstrated by the writer.

As the final month of implementation arrived, the teachers continued implementing the conflict resolution program within their classrooms. Additionally, the student mediators were given the solution agreement form (see Appendix H) to be utilized with students during a conflict resolution session during future mediation encounters. The writer spent the eighth month collecting and analyzing data on pre/post assessment instruments (Appendices A, B, and C) to determine the effectiveness of the conflict resolution and mediation training programs.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Results

The process of assisting teachers in decreasing verbal and physical encounters among students will help to establish an environment that encourages cooperation and respect, rather than disrespect and intolerance. By understanding and utilizing appropriate conflict resolution strategies, the elementary teachers then helped to reduce the number of conflicts within their classroom environments.

The problem involved a means of developing a teacher training program and a student mediation training program for the acquisition of conflict resolution strategies as a way to prevent and lessen student encounters. Project outcomes were designed to evaluate the success and effectiveness of the practicum implementation and were focused toward establishing positive change in teachers' and students' knowledge levels with respect to conflict resolution strategies. It was expected that following the 8-month implementation period, the elementary teachers would be provided with information concerning conflict resolution strategies and methods to incorporate these strategies within classroom instruction and activities. Additionally, it was expected that as elementary students received this direct instruction from their teachers explaining conflict resolution strategies, verbal and physical encounters among each other would significantly decrease. The third expectation of the 8-month implementation period involved the training of student mediators in effective peaceful mediation skills to utilize with their peers through the implementation of a conflict resolution process of problem-solving, thus helping to reduce conflicts among their peers.

Following the 8-month training program with the elementary teachers, a postimplementation faculty questionnaire (see Appendix A) survey was given to each of the 10 elementary teachers. The results of this questionnaire showed that 10 out of 10 elementary teachers developed an understanding of effective conflict resolution strategies that would help reduce verbal and physical encounters among students as indicated by a score of 4 or higher for each question. In fact, there were no scores lower than a 4 on any of the 10 questions asked on the faculty questionnaire; and, for every question asked, six or more teachers responded with a score of 5 (see Table 4). There was a significant increase in the number of responses of "consistently" and "somewhat consistently" following the 8-month implementation of the conflict resolution teacher training program. The preimplementation results recorded on the faculty questionnaire are presented in Table 1.

Table 8

Faculty Questionnaire - Spring 1994

Questions	Number of Teacher Responses C	S	O	I	N
1. I incorporate conflict resolution strategies as a method to help students develop appropriate social behaviors.	7	3	0	0	0
2. I utilize conflict resolution techniques that help students develop stronger self-esteem.	8	2	0	0	0
3. I implement strategies that help students use less name-calling and fewer put-down comments.	9	1	0	0	0
4. I utilize techniques that increase the use of supportive comments by students.	7	3	0	0	0
5. I use specific techniques that help students learn to work and play cooperatively.	9	1	0	0	0
6. I am confident in my ability to prevent body contact among students in my classroom.	6	4	0	0	0
7. I use techniques that help students develop more caring sensitive behaviors toward each other.	8	2	0	0	0
8. I have developed specific techniques to help students increase their skills in understanding other points of view.	7	3	0	0	0
9. I have taught mediation skills to students.	6	4	0	0	0
10. I am aware of specific active listening techniques that assist students in developing conflict resolution strategies.	9	1	0	0	0
n = 10 Total Number of Responses	76	24	0	0	0

Scale: 5 = Consistently
4 = Somewhat Consistently
3 = Occasionally
2 = Infrequently
1 = Never

Additionally, a postimplementation assessment through self-reporting was done by 50 elementary students in Grades 3, 4, and 5 using the student questionnaire (see Appendix B). The results from this assessment device indicated a significant increase in the responses of "always" and "often" from the 50 students regarding their knowledge and use of conflict resolution as a tool to solve problems. It is important to note that there were no response of "seldom" or "not at all" on the postimplementation questionnaire. As measured by the postimplementation device (see Appendix B), 46 out of 50 students rated themselves as a 4 or higher on the utilization of conflict resolution strategies (see Table 5). The students' responses indicated a clearer understanding of peaceful ways to handle their daily conflicts. The preimplementation results recorded on the student questionnaire are presented in Table 2.

Equally important, the 10 student mediators in Grades 3 through 5 rated themselves on the student mediation assessment device (see Appendix C) following the 8-month implementation program. An analysis of individual self-ratings as expressed by the 10 student mediators were reflective of heightened levels of competencies in regards to conflict resolution strategies and mediation techniques. The results of this training program were most significant in that 10 out of 10 student mediators responded "yes" for every question on the student mediator assessment device (see Table 6).

Table 5

Student Questionnaire - Spring 1994

Questions	Number of Student Responses A	O	S	Se	N
1. I feel liked.	42	5	3	0	0
2. I get along well with my classmates.	47	2	1	0	0
3. I know how to solve problems without yelling and calling names.	46	2	2	0	0
4. I know how to solve problems with my friends without using body contact.	45	2	3	0	0
5. I listen to others when conflicts arise.	42	5	3	0	0
6. I speak kindly to my friends.	46	1	3	0	0
7. I help my friends solve problems.	42	4	4	0	0
8. I tell my friends if they do something that makes me angry.	44	3	3	0	0
	354	24	22	0	0

n = 50 Scale:
5 = Always
4 = Often
3 = Sometimes
2 = Seldom
1 = Not at all

Table 6

Student Mediator Assessment
Results - Spring 1994

Competency	Number of Student Responses Yes	No
1. Understands mediation techniques.	10	0
2. Understands ways to help students handle anger and frustration.	10	0
3. Understand "reflective "listening" techniques.	10	0
4. Understands how to guide students to use conflict resolution strategies.	10	0
5. Understand ways to help students learn about peaceful solutions to conflicts.	10	0
	50	0
n = 10		

The students' responses indicated a clearer understanding of these five competencies. The preimplementation calculation of results recorded on the student mediation assessment are presented in Table 3.

During the implementation period, a systematic observation conducted by the writer indicated that the 10 elementary teachers were consistently implementing the conflict resolution strategies within their classrooms. Three of the 10 elementary teachers began to organize lessons using the conflict resolution strategies. The writer observed 9 out of 10 teachers implementing many of the conflict resolution strategies that were introduced during implementation. Additionally, many of the teachers spent time during team meetings to discuss real conflicts with their colleagues that had occurred during the week. The discussions centered around ways that conflict resolution strategies could have been incorporated into each situation. In fact, two teachers indicated to the writer that by instructing their students in conflict resolution strategies the number of verbal and physical encounters were significantly reduced. Many teachers stated, "My students understand now that it is no longer acceptable in my classroom to engage in verbal or physical altercations," or "I feel more in control of my students' behavior because I know what to do to avoid conflicts or to deal with them when they occur," or "Students seem to feel better about each other and are treating each other more respectfully than before."

Another project outcome addressed the need for students to understand peaceful methods for solving conflicts. During the 8-month implementation period, the writer observed students using conflict resolution strategies to solve problems with friends in the classrooms, the playground, and the lunchroom. The directed instruction given by the teachers in conflict resolution provided the students with specific concepts and values regarding methods to solve problems. The instruction followed by role-playing real situations helped to increase the students' knowledge of conflict resolution strategies and ways that these strategies could assist them in dealing with conflicts. It was anticipated that postimplementation all 50 students would continue utilizing the conflict resolution strategies that were demonstrated by their teachers during the 8-month implementation period. The writer observed students at various grade levels saying such statements as, "We can't use body contact anymore," or "Let's not argue about who's safe on base, but let's find a solution to this argument," or "I am cooling down over here because I was angry." Students in the elementary grades visibly demonstrated many of the conflict resolution strategies as they interacted with their peers. Teachers reported many occurrences of problems being solved among students using conflict resolution strategies without the need for intervention by the teacher.

The mediation training program gave student mediators the skills to help their peers when problems occurred within the school environment. Two of the student mediators were commended by their teachers for assisting with mediation as students encountered problems. The mediation training program exceeded its anticipated goal and the positive change was quite favorable and considered significant. The mediators' knowledge of the conflict mediation process appeared to be understood as they easily followed each step in the mediation training process. Their understanding was further noticed as they eagerly interacted with their peers and teachers in an effort to solve classroom conflicts. During the implementation stage, 8 out of 10 mediators were able to implement Steps II and IV without the writer's assistance. As a matter of fact, the mediators stated to the writer that they understood the mediation process.

The mediators in Grade 3 appeared to have more difficulty than those students in Grades 4 and 5 remembering the mediation process, especially the solution generating steps (see Appendix E). The writer facilitated this learning process by giving suggestions and allowing the students in Grades 4 and 5 to serve as mentors for the third-grade students for the solution stage of the conflict resolution program. In addition, the writer found that it was necessary as each new strategy was introduced to provide extensive role-playing opportunities for the student mediators in the third grade in order for the students to feel comfortable about each new strategy.

In summary, the elementary teachers have begun to utilize most of the conflict resolution strategies within their classrooms shared by the writer. The writer has observed the students using these techniques on a daily basis to help solve conflicts among students. Additionally, the writer has frequently witnessed the student mediators working with the elementary teachers applying the mediation process to assist their peers in solving school-related conflicts. Furthermore, the writer has noticed a significant decrease in the number of student referrals for inappropriate behavior or language from the elementary teachers this school year. Weinke and others (1991) stated that a positive, proactive approach to social skills development within schools will help alleviate social skills deficits. The writer's results support the idea that positive intervention will reduce and hopefully alleviate inappropriate behavioral responses from students.

Discussion

Among the most informative aspects of this practicum was the pre- and postimplementation questionnaire data. The questionnaires allowed for an analysis of a variety of overall conclusions associated with the teachers' and students' written indications.

The teacher questionnaire data reflected the need for training programs to assist in the management and elimination of inappropriate verbal and physical responses from students during a conflict situation. The teachers responded to each question on the faculty questionnaire (see Appendix A) with choices ranging from "occasionally," "infrequently," or "never." Responses from the faculty indicated a need for a training program in peaceful ways to help solve and alleviate conflicts among students in their classrooms.

After reviewing the students' responses on the student questionnaire (see Table 5), the writer noted that there were only 22 responses on the questionnaire indicating that conflict resolution strategies were followed "sometimes." These results indicated an increase in awareness levels of conflict resolution strategies that have become positive options for students, rather than resorting to verbal or physical responses to disagreements or misunderstandings. The student questionnaire indicated that students had greatly benefitted from the direct instruction provided to them from their classroom teachers on conflict resolution. In general, the students responded with high degrees of positive responses of "always" and "often." The elementary teachers stated that discussions occurred during the conflict resolution lessons which further reflected a gain in the needed knowledge and skills regarding conflict resolution strategies.

The third projected outcome of this implementation far exceeded the writer's expectations as indicated by the results of the mediator assessment questionnaire (see Table 6). Ten out of 10 mediators self-reported that they had gained much needed knowledge of mediation strategies as indicated by 100% "yes" responses after the 8-month implementation program. It is important to note that the mediators had some reservations about their ability to be a peer mediator prior to the implementation program. Students stated, "What if my friends don't want my help?" or "What if I can't remember the steps to mediation?" or "I am not sure I can understand what to do." It was apparent to the writer that many students had some anxieties concerning the mediation process. However, postimplementation, the mediator responses included, "My friends ask the teacher for me to be involved in solving conflicts," or "I feel that I can help my friends get along better," or "Mediation takes a lot of thinking, but it works." The mentors requested that they be involved in training additional mentors for next school year.

In conclusion, the overall success of this project was evident form the data collected. The global outcomes were reflective of positive change in the teachers' and students' knowledge and attitudes in regard to solving problems in a peaceful, nonviolent manner. It has been concluded that an improvement in the elementary teachers' and students' knowledge about conflict resolution and mediation strategies has led to improved relationships between students, a reduction in the verbal and physical encounters among students, and more accountability for exhibiting appropriate responses to a conflict situation.

Recommendations

It is strongly recommended that specific consideration be given to adopting conflict resolution as a component of every school's social skills curriculum. The conflict resolution training can provide elementary teachers with specific tools to use with students to ensure the maintaining of a peaceful and respectful school climate. Conflict resolution afforded the teachers and students an option to solving conflicts in a negative manner, such as inappropriate verbal or physical responses.

Videotaping the mediation sessions would provide students and teachers with a readily available resource library of film on conflict resolution. Teachers could also consider videotaping their conflict resolution lessons as these could then be utilized as training tapes for future training sessions.

Additionally, the mediators could provide ongoing training for new mediators each school year. The inexperienced students could observe the trained mediators implementing the conflict resolution strategies with peers. Ongoing maintenance and enhancement training is a crucial element to continue reinforcing the use of conflict resolution strategies within each classroom. Students must be given continued inservices and the opportunity to practice conflict resolution throughout each school year.

It was evident that the type of training programs for the teachers and the students was sufficient to meet their needs. However, the mediators stated that the sessions needed to be longer in length in order to feel more comfortable about each new conflict strategy as it was introduced to them. Perhaps, by extending the sessions to a one hour time frame this would allow the student mediators to practice each strategy with their fellow mediators.

An unexpected outcome of this practicum was the result that the mediators began to develop friendships across grade levels on a personal basis. Also, the teachers felt that there was a sense of bonding that was established between the teachers and the mediators as they worked together for peace. For example, one of the mediators in Grade 3 stated, "I understand now that my teacher works hard to help us all get along." The mediators and teachers talked about each mediation session and the results the solutions generated. Further expansion of this project into the middle school grade levels should be considered for the upcoming school year.

Dissemination

Among the opportunities for dissemination are presentations at local educational conferences and workshops concerned with behavior management or social skills development. The writer has been asked to present this conflict resolution program during the summer of 1994 to a graduate education class at a local university. In addition, during the upcoming 1994 school year, the writer plans on expanding the mediation program from the elementary level through the middle school level. In addition, student mediators will be chosen from Grades 3 through 8 and the current mediators will assist the writer in training the new mediators. During the 1994 teacher orientation week, the writer will be hosting an inservice program on the implementation of conflict resolution for teachers in Grades 3 through 8.

This practicum can be easily adapted to meet the needs of any school as the philosophy and strategies could easily be incorporated into most social skills curriculum. Additionally, the practicum will be shared with other schools within the organization that will find the contents adaptable and useful for their teachers and students.

The writer is currently writing a conflict resolution parent program which will be presented in January 1995 at the school's annual Parent Enrichment Night. The contents of this new program will be based on the conflict resolution strategies presented in this practicum. The format will be flexible and therefore can be modified or changed as new needs arise in the future. It is the writer's hope that this practicum model will serve as a model for other administrators to use within their school settings.

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APPENDIX A

FACULTY ASSESSMENT
PRE/POST IMPLEMENTATION

APPENDIX A

FACULTY ASSESSMENT
PRE/POST IMPLEMENTATION

Directions: Rate yourself using the scale below concerning your knowledge and use of conflict resolution strategies in your classroom.

Rating Scale:
5 - Consistently
4 - Somewhat Consistently
3 - Occasionally
2 - Infrequently
1 - Never

1. I incorporate conflict resolution strategies as a method to help students develop appropriate social behaviors.

   1 2 3 4 5

2. I utilize conflict resolution techniques that help students develop stronger self-esteem.

   1 2 3 4 5

3. I implement strategies that help students use less name-calling and fewer put-down comments.

   1 2 3 4 5

4. I utilize techniques that increase the use of supportive comments by students.

   1 2 3 4 5

5. I use specific techniques that help students learn to work and play cooperatively.

   1 2 3 4 5

6. I am confident in my ability to prevent body contact among students in my classroom.

   1 2 3 4 5

APPENDIX A

FACULTY ASSESSMENT
PRE/POST IMPLEMENTATION

7. I use techniques that help students develop more caring sensitive behaviors toward each other.

    1 2 3 4 5

8. I have developed specific techniques to help students increase their skills in understanding other points of view.

    1 2 3 4 5

9. I have taught mediation skills to students which help them solve conflicts using peaceful methods.

    1 2 3 4 5

10. I am aware of specific active listening techniques that assist students in developing conflict resolution strategies.

    1 2 3 4 5

APPENDIX B

STUDENT ASSESSMENT
PRE/POST IMPLEMENTATION

APPENDIX B

STUDENT ASSESSMENT
PRE/POST IMPLEMENTATION

Directions: This is not a test. Please read the questions below. Circle the word that best indicates how you feel about the statement.

Rating Scale: 5 - Always
4 - Often
3 - Sometimes
2 - Seldom
1 - Not at all

1. I feel liked.

   Always Often Sometimes Seldom Not at all

2. I get along well with my classmates.

   Always Often Sometimes Seldom Not at all

3. I know how to solve problems without yelling and calling names.

   Always Often Sometimes Seldom Not at all

4. I know how to solve problems with my friends without using body contact.

   Always Often Sometimes Seldom Not at all

5. I listen to others when conflicts arise.

   Always Often Sometimes Seldom Not at all

6. I speak kindly to my friends.

   Always Often Sometimes Seldom Not at all

APPENDIX B

STUDENT ASSESSMENT
PRE/POST IMPLEMENTATION

7. I help my friends solve problems.

Always Often Sometimes Seldom Not at all

8. I tell my friends if they do something that makes me angry.

Always Often Sometimes Seldom Not at all

APPENDIX C

STUDENT MEDIATOR ASSESSMENT

APPENDIX C

STUDENT MEDIATOR ASSESSMENT

Please read each question. Place an "X" next to the response that best fits your understanding of mediation techniques.

Questions:	Student Response	
	Yes	No
1. Understands mediation techniques.	_____	_____
2. Understands ways to help students handle anger and frustration.	_____	_____
3. Understands "reflective listening" techniques.	_____	_____
4. Understands how to guide students to use conflict resolution strategies.	_____	_____
5. Understands ways to help students learn about peaceful solutions to conflicts.	_____	_____

APPENDIX D

TEACHER TRAINING PACKET

APPENDIX D

TEACHER TRAINING PACKET

Teachers can utilize the information provided within this packet to create their own conflict resolution lessons based on the age and needs of their students. Monthly themes can be created by the teacher and/or developed school-wide. Once the basic conflict resolution strategies are taught, teachers can design ongoing lessons to practice and reinforce these strategies with their students.

Conflict resolution is a continually developing skill for students that needs to become part of a teacher's behavior management program.

Conflicts

Conflict is part of everyday life. When two people are together, differences in opinions are inevitable. Unfortunately, these differences may lead to conflicts.

Differences in opinions and perceptions will always exist. Students come from different backgrounds and experiences which affects the way people view things.

Many times negative stereotypes interfere with one person getting along with another person. Additionally, prejudices and negative stereotypes can cause conflicts, hence, causing anger or frustration.

APPENDIX D

Students become irritated or angry with someone and many times express this anger through inappropriate verbal responses or physical contact. Students need to learn peaceful methods to solve conflicts within their lives.

What is conflict?

Many times classroom conflicts are a result of other problems within the school setting. Most of the time conflicts arise because there is a difference of opinion between two or more students. There are numerous causes of conflicts that prevent the establishment of a peaceful learning environment.

Classroom Conflict Creators

1. Competitive Atmosphere - this type of classroom atmosphere may cause students to work against each other, rather than as a team.

2. Intolerant Atmosphere - this type of classroom is unfriendly and accusatory.

3. Poor Communication - this type of atmosphere does not allow students to listen and to practice expressing their feelings aloud to one another.

APPENDIX D

4. Inadequate Problem-Solving Skills - students are not taught effective conflict solving strategies, nor are these modeled by the teacher.

How do your students respond to conflicts?

Do they . . . . . ?

1. Use body contact
2. Resort to name calling
3. Talk it out with adult help
4. Ignore each other
5. Make faces at each other
6. Listen reflectively to one another's explanations and arrive at appropriate solutions

Obviously, #6 is the wish of every classroom teacher. This wish can be realized by directly engaging students in conflict resolution strategies. Students can practice appropriate conflict resolution strategies everyday within their classroom environment. The teacher is the facilitator in creating a philosophy of peace within a classroom.

Conflict Resolution Techniques

A conflict resolution technique is simply a peaceful, safe method for resolving problems or differences of opinions between two or more students.

APPENDIX D

STEP I: "Cooling Off" or "Time-Out" Strategies can be effective for defusing a potentially explosive situation or for those situations involving name calling and body contact.

Angry Student --> Private Cool-Down Time Given
(Student is sent to a specific
area and may return when calm)
and/or
Deep Breathing Technique
(Ask student/s to take slow deep
breaths as they count to 15)
and/or
Meditation Time
(student/s sit alone and silently
for 3-5 minutes depending on the
age and temperament of the child)

STEP II: Talk Time 1-2-3

This conflict resolution technique involves one student at a time talking about the feelings and events which led up to the conflict. The other student or students are asked not to interrupt, but to listen.

APPENDIX D

There needs to be a nonpartisan person facilitating this process as each student is provided an opportunity to speak.

1. One student SPEAKS
2. Other students LISTEN
3. Everyone THINKS about what is being said

STEP III: Choosing a Solution

Conflict resolution often requires that we learn how to expand our understanding of the world. Students can learn how to resolve a conflict by making the best choice for a solution. The consequences of those choices need to be discussed as students begin to examine the many solutions to their conflict.

Teachers should help students:

1. Examine the alternatives
    a. The technique of brainstorming can help students to begin thinking about possible solutions. List these.
    b. Eliminate the brainstorming suggestions that students agree would not be workable or that may be too difficult to implement.
    c. Prioritize the solutions that everyone agrees are possibilities.

APPENDIX D

2. Make a choice

   Students must agree upon the best solution for the conflict. Students make a decision and then can begin to start on their journey to peaceful resolution of conflicts.

STEP IV: Implement the Solution

Students agree to begin implementing the agreed upon solutions to the conflict immediately. The teacher needs to observe the implementation of the solution and be available if further discussion or modification of the solution needs to occur.

STEP V: Introduce Alternative Responses to Conflict Resolution

Conflicts can seem complicated. Effective conflict facilitators can help students begin to become aware of alternative strategies to use to resolve conflicts.

1. Tolerance - students can defer to the wishes of another student when the issue is not of major importance. Minor conflicts can be avoided.

2. Take Turns - students need to practice taking turns within the classroom environment. Teachers need to give specific examples on ways students can take turns with materials in the classroom. In addition, simple

APPENDIX D

techniques, such as flipping a coin, or a hand game, such as one-potato, two-potato, can decide for students who goes first.

3. Modify Choices - Teachers can help students learn to compromise as they make choices about activities. Children can be shown how to list the various possibilities and to make modifications in the activities, if needed.

4. Identify New Choices - students may need to try new approaches to solving conflicts if the usual ones don't seem to work. Mediators can help students view situations from all aspects.

APPENDIX E

STUDENT MEDIATION ACTIVITIES

APPENDIX E

STUDENT MEDIATION ACTIVITIES

Conflicts are part of our everyday life. It is impossible to eliminate conflict. The process for resolving conflicts must begin from within ourselves. Conflict resolution strategies can be learned by students. Peer helpers can serve as mediators.

The student mediation activities will provide students with information concerning the steps that need to be taken to help other students learn to resolve their conflicts. The mediators need to practice these eight steps with adult supervision many times before they engage alone in actual conflict mediation.

APPENDIX E

STEP ONE

The Role of the Student Mediator

Peer mediators are caring students who serve as impartial listeners and facilitators to help other students resolve conflicts. Mediators help refocus students' negative energies into a cooperative problem-solving approach.

Peer mediators listen attentively as students describe their conflicts. The information shared is always kept confidential and is never shared with anyone.

Activity 1: Discuss the role of a mediator in a conflict.

Activity 2: Establish guidelines with the student mediators:

1. Remain impartial and calm.
2. Practice reflective listening.
3. Allow each student to tell his or her side of the story without interruption.
4. As each child talks, have him or her first tell what the problem was and then what happened during the conflict.
5. Help guide the students to develop some possible solutions and to choose one to implement.

APPENDIX E

6. Ask the students to think about more effective ways to solve the problem than the one they used.

Important!

7. Ask for adult help if the students are unwilling to cooperate or if the conflict situation continues.

APPENDIX E

STEP TWO

The following rules need to be introduced to the mediation team of students. The conflict resolution model has been adapted from ACS Systematic Training for Effective Parenting.

Conflict Resolution Rules for Mediators

1. Take time to "cool down" before trying to resolve a conflict.
2. "I" is used by each student to describe their involvement in the conflict. One child speaks and the other(s) listen. Everyone is given an opportunity to state their feelings and the problem as they view it.
3. The problem is restated by the students until both agree on "what is the problem."
4. The children begin to discuss possible solutions to the problem. All must agree on the best solution for the problem.
5. The children give each other a compliment and agree to begin implementing the solution.

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STEP THREE

Conflict Strategies

Mediators need to remain impartial and calm.

The mediator needs to determine:

A. Who is involved in the conflict?

B. Is it the right time for the students to talk things out?

C. Where should we go to discuss this conflict?

D. Which conflict resolution technique should be used?

  1. Cooling off - ask each student to go to a separate area to cool off.
  2. Sit silently - ask each student to sit silently for a few minutes.
  3. Deep breathing - ask each student to take a few deep breaths while the mediator counts slowly to 10.

Activity 1

Procedure:

1. Focus on the emotion of anger. Ask each child to demonstrate different actions that show someone is angry.

2. Ask one student to use one of the conflict resolution techniques (cooling down, sit silently, or

deep breathing) with an angry student. Practice all three by having the mediators practice being the angry student and the mediator.

Discussion:

1. What important clues should a mediator look for when entering an angry situation?

Activity 2

Procedure:

1. Brainstorm emotion words and list these on a chalkboard. Next to each word have the mediators discuss specific situations where they have observed conflicts.

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STEP FOUR

In order for student mediators to be able to help others solve problems, they need to be effective communicators. The mediator needs to be a reflective listener so he or she can "decode" the message from the students in conflict.

Listening involves seeing and hearing. Mediators need to become reflective listeners.

Activity 1

Discuss using the 5 "W" words when helping students resolve conflicts and how they can be helpful to mediators.

WHO, WHAT, WHY, WHEN, WHERE

Activity 2

Have students locate newspaper articles containing conflicts. Read stories aloud. The students will identify the 5 W's in each story.

APPENDIX E

Activity 3

Students will use the listener checklist to rate their listening skills.

Listener Checklist

Effective listeners:

		Yes	No
1.	Look at the person as they speak.	_____	_____
2.	Use body gestures to indicate to the speaker that they are listening.	_____	_____
3.	Think about the words of the speaker.	_____	_____
4.	Restate the problem to each speaker.	_____	_____
5.	Avoid interrupting the speaker.	_____	_____

APPENDIX E

STEP FIVE

The mediator needs to find a quiet safe place for the sharing of information. Those students involved in the conflict have a right for privacy.

Mediators need to tell the students that mediation works only when everyone involved respects the rights of others to share their feelings and ideas.

One student tells his information while the other student(s) listen without interrupting. "I" messages are used.

Each child restates the problem that the other child shared. Mediators guide the student until agreement is reached on what the student shared. Mediators restate what each student relayed as the problem.

Activity 1

Mediators practice listening to another mediator share a make-believe story. Then, the listener must restate the story until agreement is reached by the storyteller.

Activity 2

Practice summarizing short stories about conflicts. Take turns being the listener and storyteller. Make-believe situations can be used.

APPENDIX E

STEP SIX

Mediators ask the students to tell how they are responsible for the conflict. "I" messages are used.

Activity 1

Mediators practice responding to the situations below by roleplaying. Each mediator becomes a "conflict character."

Conflict Situations

A. Jeanne took Phillip's pencil and broke the point on the pencil. She gave back the pencil, but Phillip is very angry and called her a name.

B. Ruth told lies about Shelly. Shelly hit Ruth.

C. Barbara laughed at Stuart while he was running a relay race. Stuart screamed inappropriate names at Barbara.

D. Meghan pushed Josh during lunch. Josh said he was going to "get her" later during recess.

APPENDIX E

STEP SEVEN

Mediators help guide students to find solutions to their conflicts. Solving conflicts means that ideas from all parties involved must be integrated to find the best solution for the conflict.

Mediators listen to students as they brainstorm solutions, then begin to evaluate and eliminate solutions from the brainstorming activity. The remaining solutions should be discussed to determine if there are any hidden problems with these solutions.

Mediators help students select the appropriate solution through compromising and creative problem solving.

Solution <------> Brainstorming ----> Evaluating --->
Formula Elementary ----> Compromising

Activity 1

Mediators use the problems in STEP FIVE to find solutions using the Solution Formula.

APPENDIX F

LETTER TO PARENTS

APPENDIX F

LETTER TO PARENTS

October 15, 1993

Dear Parents,

I am pleased to inform you that your child has been selected to participate in a Student Mediation Training Program. As part of the requirement for my doctorate of education degree, I am responsible for selecting a part of the school program that could benefit from some interventions.

Therefore, I have developed a Student Mediation Program for students in grades 3, 4, and 5, which will help them to learn specific mediation skills and strategies. They will then assist fellow classmates during playground times to implement conflict resolution strategies. Every student at the University School is being trained in conflict resolution strategies. The mediators will simply be there to verbally remind students of various strategies to use during a conflict. The students will be supervised by their teachers, and they will only be used as consultants, not "disciplinarians" on the playground. Peer modeling is found to be a positive factor in changing behaviors.

I am very much looking forward to working with your child during the next few months, and I hope that you will talk with your child about the strategies they are learning. They will help me train other student mediators in the future. Please sign below if you give your child permission to be involved in this program. I you have any questions, please feel free to call me at 752-3020.

Sincerely,

Jeanne Korn
Director

I give my permission for ______________________ to participate in the Student Mediation Program.

Parent Signature ___________________________

Date ____________________

APPENDIX G

TEACHER DESIGNED LESSON PLANS

APPENDIX G

TEACHER DESIGNED LESSON PLANS

First Grade

Subject: Conflict Resolution

Objective

Students will be able to express their feelings and learn how important it is to speak for themselves.

Materials

Book titled Bernstein Bears Get in a Fight

Procedure

Teacher will read to students stopping for questions and examples that pertain to their everyday lives. This will allow students to see how important it is to share their feelings.

Time

20-30 minutes

Evaluation

Teacher will divide the class into four groups. Each group will be given a situation that includes a problem and a solution, and they will act it out. Teacher will expect them to share their real feelings. When this occurs, teacher will determine if this is an effective lesson on feelings.

---

* This lesson plan was submitted by one of the elementary teachers at the practicum site.

APPENDIX G

First Grade - Conflict Resolution Lesson Plan

Objective

The purpose of this lesson is to identify conflicts and how they are resolved by the characters in a given fairy tale.

Materials

Hansel and Gretel (storybook or photocopy of story)
puppet theater

google eyes
popsicle sticks
construction paper
fabric
rubberbands
glue
crayons
scissors
glitter

Miscellaneous art supplies that will be used to create the characters in the form of puppets.

Vocabulary

conflict
resolve
resolution

Class Discussion

Conflicts can occur between two or more people
    (Man vs. Man)
Conflicts can occur between a person and his/her environment.
    (Man vs. Nature)
Conflicts can occur within oneself.
    (Man vs. Self)

Procedure

The children will read Hansel and Gretel.

They will discuss the sequence and events in the story

* This lesson plan was submitted by one of the elementary teachers at the practicum site.

APPENDIX G

Procedure (continued)

The entire class will help to create a story map. This may will be used as a visual aid (script) when the children use their puppets to show Hansel and Gretel in various conflicts.

The children will create puppets using a variety of materials.

The class will be divided into four groups.

Each group will work cooperatively to complete their performance.

Group one will act out the sequence of events in Hansel and Gretel.

Group two will identify a conflict between two or more characters.

Group three will identify a conflict between a character and his/her environment.

Group four will identify a conflict between a character and himself/herself.

Each group will use their puppets to dramatize how the characters in Hansel and Gretel dealt with their conflicts.

After each performance, the children will be asked to think of another way in which each character could have resolved his/her own conflict in Hansel and Gretel.

Evaluation

Class discussion

Children will write at least three sentences to tell what they learned about conflicts in Hansel and Gretel.

* This lesson plan was submitted by one of the elementary teachers at the practicum site.

APPENDIX G

Follow Up Activities

Other fairy tales may be read and conflicts within them discussed.

Discuss the reality of the fairy tales.

Could some of the conflicts faced by the characters in fairy tales be conflicts that children in school could be confronted with?

Length of Time

Approximately 3 hours

Time should be divided over a period of several days.

The length of time needed to complete each part of this lesson will vary according to the ability of the group.

* This lesson plan was submitted by one of the elementary teachers at the practicum site.

APPENDIX G

Grade 1 - Conflict Resolution Lesson Plan

Objectives

1. To identify what conflicts and resolutions are.
2. Children will realize that everyone has conflicts and choices in evaluating each possible solution to obtain the best outcome.
3. The children will discuss consequences for inappropriate behavior and bad choices: (Loss of stamp, loss of recess, time out, letter of apology to student offended signed by parents, call home if necessary).
4. Children will learn and understand what it means to compromise.
5. Children will learn the meaning of respect and that everyone has feelings.
6. Children will understand that there are different degrees of conflicts and that they need to be taken seriously.

Procedures

1. Discuss what conflicts and resolutions are.
2. Relate personal experiences about conflicts and possible choices to obtain the ideal resolution.
3. Discuss the IDEAL strategy for resolving a conflict.

Identify the problem.
Decide on possible choices to solve the problem.
Evaluate each choice and choose the best one.
Act on your choice.
Learn from your experience.

- Teacher and children will discuss different conflicts they have encountered (not naming other children).
- Decide on possible choices and the outcomes for each choice.

* This lesson plan was submitted by one of the elementary teachers at the practicum site.

APPENDIX G

Procedures (continued)

- Make the best choice.
- Learn from your experience.
- Children will understand the consequences for inappropriate behavior and the severity of the consequences will be appropriate for their inappropriate behavior.

Activities

Through role playing, the children will:

1. Resolve conflicts.
2. Use puppets to resolve conflicts.
3. Dress up and act out a specific conflict and resolve it.
4. Choose a conflict and act out the steps to obtain the best choice in solving the problem.
5. Choose characters from fairy tales and children's literature, identify the problem and solve it through role playing, puppetry, and dressing up.
6. Watch the Reading Rainbow video "Feelings."

Evaluation

Since implementing this program into our curriculum, the children have been better able to solve problems on their own, understand that we all have feelings, know what it means to be respectful, and are more willing to share and care about each other.

We will continue to let you know about the progress the children make by using Conflict Resolution.

* This lesson plan was submitted by one of the elementary teachers at the practicum site.

APPENDIX G

Grade 2 - Conflict Resolution Lesson Plan

Problem Identified: Name Calling (on playground)

Procedures

- Teacher asks students what consequences should result from name calling.
- Students suggested the following:
    1. loss of recess
    2. time off from recess
    3. loss of bonus buck
    4. loss of all bonus bucks
    5. extra work
    6. call parents
    7. loss of student's weekly classroom job
- Teacher and students discussed all consequences. Teacher suggested that some might be a bit extreme for the offense. Students agreed. No one broke a nose. Students decided to cross off #1 and #4. After discussing consequences, students took a secret vote. Votes were tallied.
- Students decided loss of classroom responsibility would be taken away. A close second was extra work.
- Teacher asked students: "What if someone doesn't have a job?" and "What if this consequence does not bring desired results?"
- Students decided to go with #5, extra work, if first consequence did not work. Extra work is to write an apology note to the person offended and a note to their parents explaining his/her actions.*
- After deciding consequences, students discussed how to avoid name calling in the future.

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* This lesson plan was submitted by one of the elementary teachers at the practicum site.

APPENDIX G

Procedures (continued)

The following suggestions were given:

1. Be nicer to other people.
2. Work things out by compromising.

Evaluation

This was done today. We'll see how things go tomorrow.

* This reinforces current letter writing skills.

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* This lesson plan was submitted by one of the elementary teachers at the practicum site.

APPENDIX G

Grade 3 - Conflict Resolution Lesson Plan

Theme: Self-Esteem and Its Role in Conflict Resolution

Skills/Topics to be Developed

- Friendship and belonging are important basic needs.
- Everyone needs to feel "lovable and capable."
- Constructive behavior can make people feel good; destructive behavior has the opposite effect.
- Destructive behavior can lead to conflicts or escalate them.

Activities to Produce Learning Outcomes

1. Read aloud and discuss: Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day by Judith Viorst
2. Brainstorm "constructive behaviors." Discuss how they build self-esteem and good feelings.
3. Brainstorm "destructive behaviors." Discuss how these tear down self-esteem and can cause conflicts or make them worse.
4. Do "I Am Somebody" worksheet. Share and display finished activities.
5. Brainstorm solutions to entries in the "Conflict Box" if time permits.

Follow-Up and Evaluation

Encourage the use of "constructive" and "destructive" behavior vocabulary during the course of everyday conflicts that arise. See if students can identify these behaviors as they pertain to actual occurrences. Explore the use of constructive behavior when asking the question, "What could you have done instead" during conflict mediation.

* This lesson plan was submitted by one of the elementary teachers at the practicum site.

APPENDIX G

Conflict Resolution Lesson Plan

Title: Rules for Fighting Fair

Objectives

Have students recognize that in order to "fight fair" they must first identify the problem.

Students will be able to answer the question. Why is it important that people engaged in a conflict identify and understand the problem?

Procedure

We will identify the rules for fighting fair.

1. We find out the problem.
2. We attack the problem, not the person.
3. We listen to each other.
4. We care about each other's feelings.
5. We are responsible for what we say and do.

I will discuss the Fighting Fair Rules poster with the students.

We will discuss some of the fouls in fighting fair:

- Blaming
- Getting even
- Hitting
- Making excuses
- Name calling
- Bossing
- Not listening
- Teasing
- Put-downs
- Threats

Students will break up into four groups and brainstorm. They will discuss habits. What are some bad habits and what are some good habits?

* This lesson plan was submitted by one of the elementary teachers at the practicum site.

APPENDIX G

Procedure (continued)

We will share their conclusions and see if the fouls show up on their "bad habit" list. I will ask the students how they could possibly change a "bad habit." We will list on the board strategies for changing habits.

I will ask the students to conclude the discussion by answering, why the fighting fair rules will help them to better identify a problem.

Two students will exhibit a conflict in front of the room. I will pass out the enclosed evaluation sheet. Students will listen to the conflict and fill in the sheet. They will notice which rules were followed and which, if any, "fouls" were exhibited. They will also notice the relationship between the evaluation and the actual problem being resolved.

Materials

Fight Fair Poster
Evaluation Sheet

Follow-Up

Students will write and describe what the problem was that had to be solved. What kept them from resolving it, if anything, and what helped them to resolve it?

They will describe a conflict that they have had. What were the two sides? Did they resolve it? How, or would they have done it differently, how and why?

Students will keep their own evaluation sheet, in the event of a conflict they will fill it out and we will meet to discuss it.

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* This lesson plan was submitted by one of the elementary teachers at the practicum site.

APPENDIX G

Conflict Resolution Lesson Plan

Title: How Temper Alters Behavior

(This lesson can be taught separately or incorporated into a situation as it happens.)

Objectives

Students will understand how situations can cause anger in daily occurrences - Dealing with anger properly will affect your relationships with others.

Students will realize that having a problem is O.K., but dealing with it properly is important.

Students will realize when they have a problem, they must stop and think about how they are feeling before they react.

Materials

The teachers will write the word **TEMPER** on the board and ask what it means. Why do some things make you angry? Angrier than others? What are these things? Imagine your temper like a thermometer. The teacher will distribute copies (or have on the overhead) the poem "My Temperature's Reading." Students will read the poem as a choral reading. The teacher will discuss the poem and lead a discussion. Students will complete CLOZE comments on why they get angry, using worksheet or thermometers.

Instruction

Students will brainstorm in groups what makes you angry in school, at home, and on the playground. Using a graphic organizer, students will record their thoughts.

	HOME	SCHOOL	PLAYGROUND
WHAT			
HOW			
WHY			

In their small groups and brainstorm ways they handle anger without hurting others.

* This lesson plan was submitted by one of the elementary teachers at the practicum site.

APPENDIX G

Instruction (continued)

The teacher will ask students to share their group answers with the class. The students will discuss which plans they feel would be the most effective and which they feel would not work.

The teacher will lead a discussion of the differences in feelings and actions. "I feel like hitting him" is not a feeling but an action that is intended.

Evaluation

Students will be evaluated on their completion of assignments. Teacher observation and teacher assessment of responses also will determine students' learning.

Closure

Students will be given opportunity to express anger by writing about their feelings and depositing them in a "Feeling Box."

* This lesson plan was submitted by one of the elementary teachers at the practicum site.

APPENDIX G

Grade 5 - Conflict Resolution Lesson Plan

Title: Forces That Shape Behavior - Values and Perceptions

Lesson Sequence

This lesson may be taught as a single content area lesson or may be incorporated into any subject area within the curriculum when student behavior warrants.

Assessment

Post: The students will be evaluated by teacher observation, assessment of questions and answers elicited from students during the lesson, and responses to individual situations throughout the school day or curriculum.

Instructional Objectives

The students will understand the meaning of values and how they can greatly influence our behavior and the decisions we make.

The students will understand that one's decisions have consequences.

The students will understand that one must take responsibility for one's decisions and their consequences.

Set/Motivation

The teacher will have the following vocabulary words on the board: values, consequences, conflicting values, and prejudice. The teacher will direct students' attention to the board and discuss the meaning of each word.

The teacher will then be asked to take out a piece of paper and fold it into four sections. They will then cut the paper so they have four separate pieces of paper. They will then be instructed to "throw away" one of the papers that is not as important as the others. Continue until they have only one piece left. Students will then share the item they kept and tell why.

* This lesson plan was submitted by one of the elementary teachers at the practicum site.

APPENDIX G

Set/Motivation (continued)

Now, separate students into small groups and have them discuss the reasons why a person might quit school, steal, vandalize, or become a drug addict or an alcoholic. Ask them to list some consequences to him/herself, family, victims, and society.

Instruction

Ask the students, "What do kids care about?" The teacher will list student responses on the board. The class will discuss the similarities and differences between their responses. The teacher will continue to elicit responses from students as she asks, "How might these values cause conflict, Where do we learn our values, How do values shape our behavior, and What happens when values clash?"

The teacher will explain to the students how our decisions are influenced by our values, perceptions, and feelings. She will relate the concept that the decisions we make have consequences and that we must take responsibility for those decisions and their consequences. The teacher will use examples, such as Love Canal, Agent Orange, nuclear wastes, etc. She will elicit more examples from the students.

Guided Practice

The students will be asked to play the "IF" game. They will close their eyes and imagine what the world would be like if: someone gave you a million dollars, you had the power of superman/superwoman, you were President of the United States, etc?

The teacher will distribute art paper and ask the students to draw what they visualized. They will share and discuss the values they decided were important (helping others, developing self, etc.). The teacher will ask, "What kind of world did you build with your visualization?"

Individual Practice

The students will be asked to report on value conflicts demonstrated on TV "sitcoms." They will share their findings at the next class meeting.

* This lesson plan was submitted by one of the elementary teachers at the practicum site.

APPENDIX G

Closure

The teacher will restate the objectives of the lesson. An "I Care" mailbox will be set up in the classroom for students with problems to write unsigned letters for the class to brainstorm possible solutions and resolutions.

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* This lesson plan was submitted by one of the elementary teachers at the practicum site.

APPENDIX G

Conflict Resolution Lesson Plan

Title: What is Behavior?

Note: This plan can be taught as a separate lesson or after the display or mention of "bad" behavior by a student or students directed at another student.

Objectives

- Students will understand that behavior is everything a person does.
- Students will understand the terms innate and learned as they are used when referring to behavior.
- Students will evaluate behavioral choices and make responsible decisions.
- Each student will choose a behavior of his own to change.

Vocabulary

innate
learned
behavior

Materials

pencils
worksheet

Activities

- Discuss the following concepts:
  1. Who decides whether behavior is good or bad?
  2. Are you born with behavior?
  3. What are the differences between human and animal behavior?
- Distribute worksheet
- Discuss cartoons.

* This lesson plan was submitted by one of the elementary teachers at the practicum site.

APPENDIX G

Activities (continued)

- Discuss and complete charts:

  1. learned and innate behavior
  2. outside influences on your behavior

- Make generalizations about behavior (see objectives).

- Question: Do you have a behavior you want to change? What is it, and how will you accomplish the change?

- Discuss cultural diversities, cite examples, relate back to social studies and Native Americans, Spaniards, the English, the French, etc.

- Are all rules of behavior the same in every society and culture?

- In Cooperative Groups: Hypotheses: You are stranded on a deserted island with little hope of rescue for years to come.

  Task: Establish rules and consequences
  Note: Remember Jamestown, Roanoke, Plymouth, and the Mayflower Compact

- Discuss: Who decides what rules should govern people's behavior? Minister? Peers? Parents? Teachers?

- How, when, and why should rules be changed?

- Does the media (movies, TV, radio, newspaper) influence people to change their behavior? How? Positive vs. Negative

Evaluation

- Have the students define behavior, discuss learned vs. innate behaviors, and share "deserted island" rules established by each group.

- Keep a notecard and indicate each time you are aware of the behavior you want to change in yourself and exactly what you did.

* This lesson plan was submitted by one of the elementary teachers at the practicum site.

APPENDIX H

TEACHER/MEDIATOR CALENDAR LOG

APPENDIX H

TEACHER/MEDIATOR CALENDAR LOG

Month ________________ Date ________________

Activity: ____

____

____

Grade Level: __________

Number of Participants: __________

Type of Conflict: ______________________________________

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____

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Action Taken: ______________________________________

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APPENDIX I

MEDIATION SOLUTION AGREEMENT

APPENDIX I

MEDIATION SOLUTION AGREEMENT

Mediators request that each student involved in the conflict confirm the solution by stating the solution in writing. The mediator asks each student to sign the solution agreement.

Solution Agreement

I, _______________, and _______________ participated in finding an appropriate solution to our conflict.

My role in the conflict was ______________________________

____

____

____

____.

Our solution for the conflict is _________________________

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____.

Student Signature _________________________ Date ________

Mediator Signature ________________________ Date ________